



Figure 2.3 5th and 6th streets will emerge as important cross-town cycling connections linking the West 7th and Cathedral Hill neighborhoods east to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. The image above from the 5th and 6th Street Capitol Improvement Initiative highlights the three plazas along the corridor. These have the potential to support a range of events and activities, including festivals, food vendors, places of respite or performance, and public art.

3 5th and 6th Cross-Town Connections

In the evolution of the post-LRT downtown, 5th and 6th streets should emerge as important urban greenways linking the Central Station to key destinations on either side of downtown. As the principal bus and cycling routes through the city, emphasis should be placed on striking a balance between pedestrians, cyclists, cars and buses. In support of this, a more balanced street with a reduced number of lanes, or narrower lanes and shared bike routes, should be implemented.

Over the long term, as a component of a broader Transportation Master Plan for the downtown, the conversion of these streets to two-way streets should be explored. The introduction of opposing traffic lanes, combined with related improvements to the public realm, will assist in slowing vehicular traffic through these thoroughfares, create a more balanced and safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and promote a stronger retail environment that can better support street-related commercial activity.

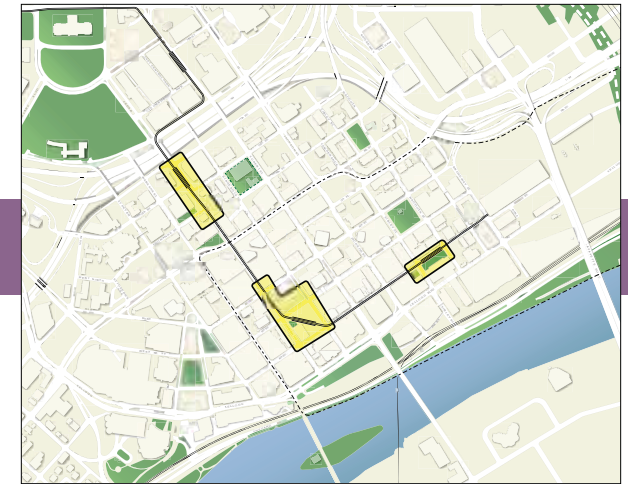


Figure 2.4 The areas around the downtown stations represent important places to focus strategies for mobility enhancement, such as clearer wayfinding, enhanced streetscaping, and improved intermodal connectivity.

4 Mobility Enhancement Areas

While construction of LRT will bring streetscape enhancements along the length of the transit corridor, strong emphasis should be focused around the three station areas in downtown. These areas present specific opportunities to create positive environments and enhance mobility where a significant increase in pedestrian and cycling activity will occur.

The intent of the Mobility Enhancement Areas is to prioritize the movement of pedestrians and cyclists to and from LRT, increase a sense of personal safety, and facilitate transfers between the different modes of transport. As distinct places along the Corridor, these areas should be distinguished through an enhanced streetscape, wayfinding, arts and cultural expression, and a landscape strategy that integrates pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and LRT, and generally improves the experience of using transit.



Figure 2.5 The historic walkable downtown street grid establishes a strong foundation for improving the pedestrian environment in downtown over time through block-by-block incremental streetscape enhancements.

5 Enhance the Grid

The enhancement of the streets that form the historic grid will be a key strategy to improve the pedestrian environment in downtown. This can be accomplished on an incremental basis through a series of small moves on a block-by-block basis as redevelopment and/or re-investment occurs. As existing buildings are renovated or retrofitted for new uses, opportunities should be sought to enhance pedestrian amenities at street level. This may include some combination of improvements to building facades, promoting ground-floor activity, and improved streetscaping. This effort should be supported through a City-led program of streetscape enhancements radiating out from existing pedestrian-focused areas (such as Rice Park and Mears Park) to create a pedestrian-friendly, walkable environment across downtown.



Figure 2.6 Opportunities to integrate cycling connections and infrastructure with LRT facilities will increase opportunities to link to a greater range of downtown attractions by multiple modes of movement.



6 Advance Opportunities for Cycling

Cycling is an increasingly important mobility option in urban centers. Improving the environment and infrastructure for cyclists to ride to and within the downtown and connect to transit will foster this active form of transportation. With respect to cycling, key mobility strategies and investments emerging from the *Bike Walk Central Corridor Action Plan* include the following:

- the transformation of both Sibley and Jackson streets into balanced roadways with more equitable provisions for pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles;
- utilization of 5th and 6th streets as important east-west “greenways” with enhanced landscaping features, traffic calming measures, and dedicated bicycle infrastructure and amenities;
- provision of cycling infrastructure, where feasible, at or near LRT stations. This may include bicycle locks, bicycle lockers, bicycle repair and maintenance services, and/or other amenities that will promote cycling as an efficient mode for reaching LRT; and
- improved connections at downtown edges to facilitate bicycle travel into and out of downtown and to achieve better connections with regional bicycle facilities.

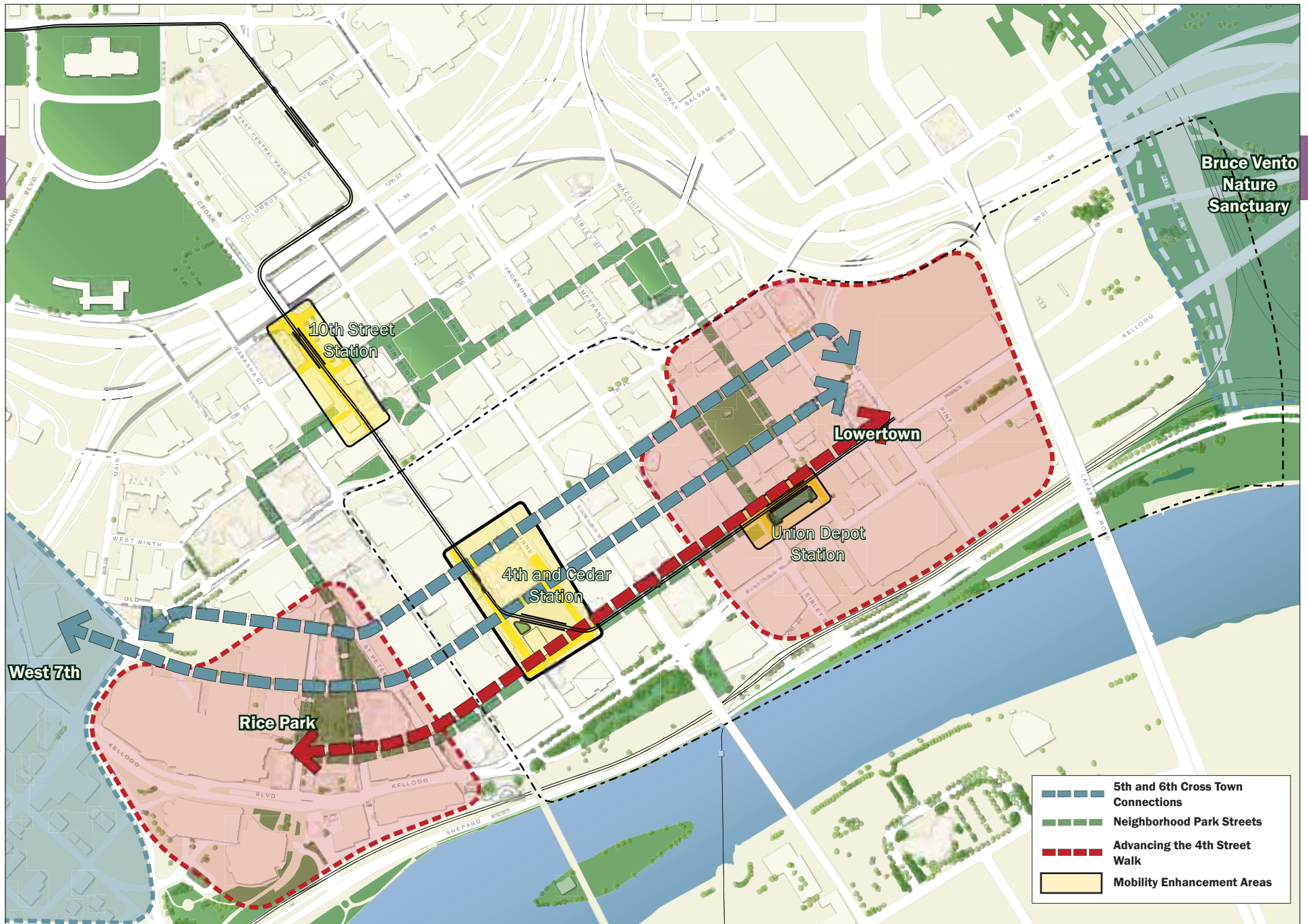


Figure 2.7 Framework of Mobility Directions.

2.2 Land Use

For a city of 270,000 people, downtown Saint Paul offers a substantial concentration of commercial, employment, residential and leisure uses. At the heart of the city is a hub of cultural activity with a number of regional attractions that bring thousands of people into the core each year. This has been complemented recently by significant new residential developments and intensification that have brought new population and activity to the core. Though diverse, the existing pattern of uses is highly clustered. There is a distinct lack of residential density in the heart of the downtown, while retail for the most part is located along a few shopping streets or above the street within the skyway system. This creates pockets of inactivity throughout the day and especially in the evenings, when the lack of a centrally-located residential population is most evident.

The introduction of LRT and the convenience, profile and enhanced pedestrian activity it will bring has the potential to boost the liveliness and economic health of downtown, while broadening the range and increasing the integration of activities.

The following Directions provide guidance for capitalizing on LRT as a way to improve real estate potential, connect sub-clusters of activity and create a finer integration of uses in the downtown.

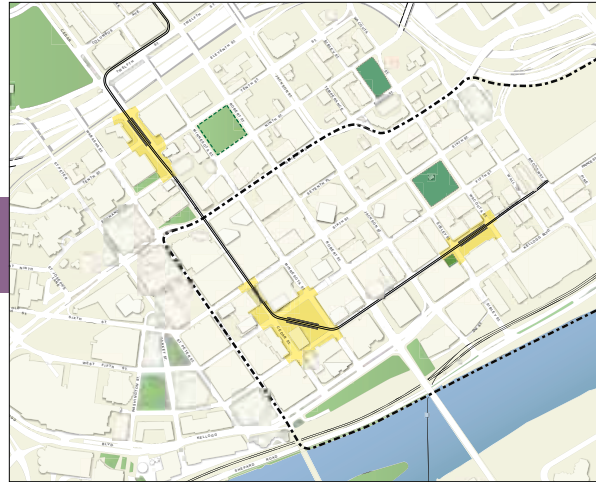


Figure 2.8 The pedestrian activity that will be generated at stations creates an opportunity for more street-related retail and neighborhood services in these areas.

1 Focus More Active Uses Around Stations

Future LRT stations create a natural catchment area for neighborhood-oriented retail and services, including coffee shops, dry cleaners, and other goods and services geared primarily to area residents and employees. Though active at-grade uses should be encouraged throughout the study area, a focus on activating ground floor retail at the stations has the greatest potential to capitalize on the traffic generated by LRT, and to support a more active streetscape.

At the 4th/Cedar Station (herein after referred to as Central Station), in particular, street-level activity can be supported through an enhanced skyway connection to the ground.



Figure 2.9 The large inventory of remarkable historic warehouse buildings creates reuse opportunities for companies looking to benefit from proximity to LRT.

2 Promote Innovative Re-Use of Historic Buildings

Saint Paul's wealth of high-quality historic buildings represents a strategic competitive advantage within an employment and housing market that increasingly favors a return to urban environments. Prospective tenants are attracted to the amenities afforded by a downtown location, including distinct work spaces, access to public transit, and proximity to restaurants, nightlife, and culture.

The conversion of existing buildings to a full range of residential, cultural, employment, and educational uses will continue to advance the revitalization of downtown Saint Paul. This transformation should be promoted through strategies aimed at attracting innovative and technology-oriented employers, and enabling the continued conversion of existing structures. In particular, the underutilized Endicott and Pioneer buildings provide an opportunity to expand Lowertown's residential, cultural, and innovative uses to bring a new mix of uses and activity into the traditional office core.



Figure 2.10 A new active recreational area east of Lafayette Bridge would help to link the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary with downtown. This will be supported through improvements to Prince Street brought about by the development of the OMF, the redevelopment of the north Diamond Products site over time, and construction of a new Trout Brook Boulevard (shown in orange).

3 Create a “Green Seam” Between Downtown and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary

Large areas of underutilized surface parking east of the Lafayette Bridge create a considerable gap on the edge of downtown, and deter pedestrians and cyclists from reaching the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. This underutilized area of land has the potential to form an integrating seam between downtown and the tremendous natural asset of the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

The implementation of a long-term plan for regional recreational grounds on this site, coupled with the redevelopment and reintegration of the Diamond Product site into the Lowertown neighborhood, represents a tremendous opportunity to bridge the gap between city and nature.

Incorporating a range of active uses to meet the needs of both downtown and regional residents would complement the more passive opportunities available in the Nature Sanctuary. These could be supplemented with facilities and programming that draw users from the broader Twin Cities region, such as soccer fields or a skate park.

Key to the success of the regional recreational facility will be improved connections east of Broadway Street over time. These should come through the re-dedication and extension of Prince Street to the east, redevelopment of the northern portion of the Diamond Products site, enhancements to the Prince Street frontage and streetscape with the development of the OMF, and enhanced north-south connections through the creation of Trout Brook Boulevard.



Figure 2.11 New active ground floor uses on 4th Street between Cedar and Wabasha will help attract pedestrian activity between LRT and the Rice Park Entertainment District.

4 Improve Connectivity Between LRT and Existing Retail on Wabasha

By drawing pedestrian activity east to Cedar, the introduction of LRT has the potential to support the vitality of existing and continued expansion of ground-related activity now occurring on Wabasha and St. Peter Streets. Encouraging active ground floor or street-related uses on east-west streets between Wabasha and Cedar will enhance the walk from the LRT station to Wabasha and the Rice Park Entertainment District, and increase the potential for pedestrian activity along Wabasha. In the long term, this creates an opportunity for an expanded core of active streets between the LRT station and the Rice Park Entertainment District.



Figure 2.12 The 4th and Cedar block (above left) and Diamond Products site (above right) are the two sites most likely to undergo significant redevelopment with the construction of LRT.



Figure 2.13 Restricting the amount of new parking downtown will help to maximize the use of existing structures, encourage use of transit, and create more opportunity for new activity-generating developments.

5 Promote Reinvestment in Strategic Redevelopment Sites

Downtown’s strategic redevelopment sites (as identified in Figure 1.7) will play a significant role in the future vitality, competitiveness, and livability of downtown. The potential of these sites should be maximized by the City.

LRT will enhance the long-term development potential of more than a dozen downtown redevelopment sites. Reinvestment in each of these sites should encourage the integration of a number of different uses; an enhanced pedestrian environment at the sidewalk level; and where provided on site, a sensitive integration of parking that neither detracts from nor conflicts with the adjacent public realm.

Two such sites are the former Diamond Products site and the Central Station block. Though the southern building on the Diamond Products site will contain the LRT Operations and Maintenance Facility, the northern

half of the site has the potential to accommodate a range of new uses over time. These include a new ballpark for the Saint Paul Saints, or an expanded medium- to high-density mixed-use development, both of which have the potential to reintegrate the site back into its Lowertown setting.

The construction of LRT through the Central Station block creates the city’s greatest opportunity to establish a new anchor office building and revitalize the profile of the office core. Given the size and scale of this potential development, the opportunity to use the redevelopment of this block to kick-start the introduction of a diverse mix of new uses, including residential and grade-related retail, is unparalleled in the core.

6 Prohibit New Single-Use Parking Structures

The oversupply of structured parking in the downtown core has the potential to negatively impact all four of

the themes discussed in this section. This abundant supply promotes the use of private automobiles, interrupts and detracts from the pedestrian environment, creates blank and inactive street walls, and absorbs development sites that could make better use of existing infrastructure and the accessibility afforded by LRT.

Restricting the amount of new parking downtown will help to maximize the use of existing structures, encourage use of transit, and create more opportunity for new activity-generating developments. New freestanding, single-use parking structures should be prohibited within the downtown core. A freestanding, single-use parking structure is one that is not physically attached to a principal use and is used for the exclusive purpose of parking cars. Where parking structures exist, the City should work with property owners to activate the ground floors with street-related uses.